

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for distributing media content across a communications network comprising at least one server and at least one client device, the client device having at least one storage device, the method comprising:

sending a plurality of media files from the server to the client device;

sending a command from the server to the client device, the command directing the client device to store the plurality of media files in the storage device;

allowing a user to browse through descriptions of the media files in the storage device;

preventing the user from accessing the media files in the storage device;

communicating with the server to authorize the user to access at least one media file in the storage device; and

allowing the user to access the at least one media file if the user is authorized to access the media file.

2. The method according to Claim 1, where the step of sending a plurality of media files comprises sending a plurality of the video files from the server to the client device, each of the video files having a normal playtime of at least 30 minutes.

3. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the step of sending a command from the server comprises sending a command to the client device causing the client device to store the plurality of files in the storage device without the need for any user inputs to the client device.

4. The method according to Claim 3, wherein user inputs includes commands input through an infrared input device directly to the client device or commands input to the client device through a control system over the network.

5. The method according to Claim 1 additionally comprising requesting payment from the user for access to at least one of the media files stored in the storage device.

6. The method according to Claim 1 additionally comprising deleting at least one of the media files stored in the storage device without the need for any user commands to be input to the client device.

7. The method according to Claim 6 additionally comprising adding at least one media file to the storage device without the need for any user commands to be input to the client device.

8. A method for selling media content to users of a client device having a storage device and connectable to a network, the method comprising:

storing a plurality of media files in the storage device of the client device;

allowing the user to browse descriptions of the media files stored in the storage device;

preventing the user from accessing the entirety of the media files; and

allowing a user to authorize payment for access to at least one of the media files.

9. The method according to Claim 8, wherein the step of storing a plurality of media files comprises storing a plurality of video files, each video file being more than 30 minutes long when played at normal speed.

10. The method according to Claim 8 additionally comprising adding different media files to the storage device without the need for any user inputs to the client device.

11. The method according to Claim 8 wherein storing a plurality of media files in the storage device comprises saving the plurality of media files and a secured library defined in the storage device.

12. The method according to Claim 11, wherein the plurality of media files are encrypted.

13. A method of tracking fees to guests of a hotel having at least one client device in each of a plurality of guestrooms in a hotel, the client device comprising a video display and computer connected to a server, the method comprising:

storing a plurality of full-length major motion pictures on a storage device of the client device;

allowing a user to browse descriptions of the full-length major motion pictures;

preventing the user from fully accessing the full-length major motion pictures;

requesting confirmation for authorization for the user to access at least one of the full-length major motion pictures;

allowing the user to fully access the at least one full-length major motion picture only if authorization is confirmed.

14. The method according to Claim 13 additionally comprising sending fee information to an accounting server of the hotel indicating that the user should be charged a fee for access to the at least one full-length major motion picture.

15. A communications network for distributing media content comprising:  
at least one server; and

at least one client device having a storage device therein, the client device configured to receive media files from the server and to store the media files from the server on the storage device without the need for any user inputs to the client device, the client device being configured to allow a user of the client device to access the media files only if the user is authorized to access the media files.

16. The network according to Claim 15, wherein the server is configured to add different media files to the storage device of the client device without the need for any user inputs to the client device.

17. The network according to Claim 16, wherein the server is configured to delete media files from the storage device of the client device without the need for any user inputs to the client device.

18. A communications network for distributing media content comprising:  
at least one server configured to distribute media content over the network;  
at least one client device communicating with the server over the network; and  
means for storing media content from the server on a storage device of the client device without the need for any user inputs to the client device, means for deleting and adding media content to the storage device of the client device from the server, without the need for any user inputs to client device, and means for selectively allowing a user to access the media content based on a payment protocol.

19. A workstation comprising:  
a video display;

a processor;

memory; and

computer readable media stored in the memory and configured to allow the workstation to accept a plurality of media files from a server over a network, to store the plurality of media files in the memory without the need for any user inputs to the workstation, and to selectively allow a user to access the media files if the user has authorization.